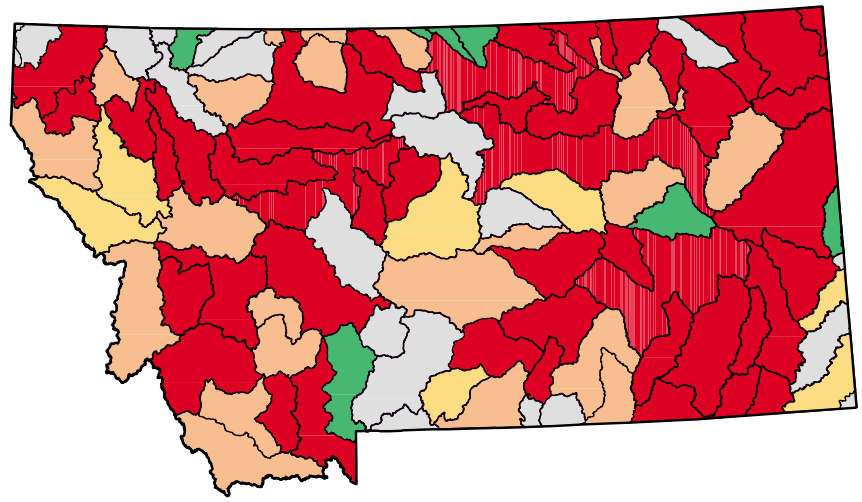
Montana



Percent of Assessed Rivers, Lakes, and Estuaries Meeting All Designated Uses

- 80% - 100% Meeting All Uses
- 50% - 79% Meeting All Uses
- 20% - 49% Meeting All Uses
- 0% - 19% Meeting All Uses
- Insufficient Assessment Coverage
- Basin Boundaries (USGS 8-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

For a copy of the Montana 1998 305(b) report, contact:

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Surface Water Quality

Water quality assessments have been done on about 10% of Montana's 177,000 stream miles and 94% of the 845,000 lake acres. These assessments have focused primarily on the largest lakes and the perennial streams where water quality problems were expected, so the results are not representative of overall state water quality. Of the assessed stream mileage, 41% has been found to fully support all uses, 52% is rated as partially supporting intended uses, while 8% does not support one or more uses. Approximately 57% of Montana's assessed lake acreage fully supports swimming and drinking water uses. Assessed lake acreage either fully supports (14%) or partially supports (86%) aquatic life use, with reservoir water level fluctuations being the primary reason for partial support classification. Nonpoint sources of pollution produce most stream and lake impairment in the state.

Ground Water Quality

More than 50% of Montanans get their domestic water supply from ground water sources. Ground water is plentiful and the quality is generally excellent, but Montana's aquifers are vulnerable to pollution from increased human activity associated with population growth. A new statewide ground water plan to protect ground water quality and quantity has just been completed, and implementation is underway.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

Montana is actively pursuing interagency/interdisciplinary watershed planning and management. The Montana Watershed Coordination Council brings together all water quality stakeholders to promote and coordinate watershed protection efforts. During 1998, state agencies participated with federal environmental agencies in development of unified watershed assessments under the federal Clean Water Action Plan initiative. Since the most prevalent impacts to state waters are from nonpoint sources, management of these sources is key to water quality protection and restoration. The state Nonpoint

Source Management Plan employs an approach emphasizing education and voluntary action supported by permits for selected activities. It focuses on three major source categories: agriculture, mining, and forestry. TMDL implementation plan development and other watershed planning efforts use a collaborative process to identify and prioritize management options that will address all major factors threatening or degrading water quality.

Programs to Assess Water Quality

In 1997 the Montana Water Quality Act was amended to provide new mandates and increased funding for water quality assessment and planning. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality was directed to complete, by October of 1999, a review of the state list of impaired waterbodies evaluating the adequacy of the data used in list development. Waterbodies lacking sufficient credible data will be targeted for immediate reassessment. The process used to determine which impaired streams or lakes receive priority for the development of TMDL implementation plans is also being revised. Finally, an ambient water quality monitoring program is being implemented. The objectives of this program are to provide an unbiased indicator of current statewide water quality that will also support trend analysis as information accumulates.

Montana is developing biological assessment methods and criteria for wetlands.

Individual Use Support in Montana

Designated Use[a]	Total Miles Assessed	Percent: Good (Fully Supporting)	Good (Threatened)	Fair (Partially Supporting)	Poor (Not Supporting)	Not Attainable
Rivers and Streams (Total Miles = 176,750)[b]						
	17,874	19	22	52	8	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lakes (Total Acres = 844,802)						
	797,190	14	-	86	0	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	798,584	57	-	42	<1	-

– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.

[a] A subset of Montana's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the state's 305(b) report for a full description of the state's uses.

[b] Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.